Published: August 2006

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Play Service
Third Floor - 125 Freston Road - London W10 6TH

T: 020 7938 8000
F: 020 7938 8020
E: learning@rbkc.gov.uk

www.rbkc.gov.uk
Thank you to:
The Play Strategy Working Group
The Parks Service within Arts and Leisure
The Children with Disabilities Team in Children's Social Care
The Play Service Management Team
Our Voluntary Sector Partners, including Westway Development Trust, Flashpoint, Hornimans, KIDS, Full of Life and Venture.
The Royal Borough Children's Fund
Sure Start North West Kensington
The Library Service
Kensington and Chelsea Social Council
The Policy and Performance Team
...and all of the children and parents that contributed so much to this document.
Contents

Foreword 2

Play Strategy: opening statement 4

The Royal Borough’s Vision for Families and Children 4

The Royal Borough’s Vision for Play 5

The scope of the Play Strategy 6

The context of the Play Strategy 6

Methodology 9

Parents’ and children’s views 9

Monitoring and implementing the Play Strategy 10

Recommendations 12

Action Plan 13
Foreword

Play enables children and young people to understand themselves and the world around them. It is a vital component of the life of every child and young person. If denied access to play, for whatever reason, the child or young person’s capacity for positive development will be inhibited or constrained.

Children need every opportunity to explore the physical and social environment around them, to play with ideas and concepts and to deal with situations that might challenge them. Play should be available to all children, reflecting their diverse physical, emotional and cultural needs.

Kensington and Chelsea is a densely populated area. Despite this, we have a number of excellent open spaces and community facilities where children can play and learn. We have worked closely with children and their families to develop our priorities for play and it is our shared aspiration to ensure that we make the most of our resources. By doing this, we plan to give all children the opportunity to enjoy playing in a wide range of environments.

Children in the borough have also produced a children’s version of the strategy. We are committed to making sure that children and young people shape this strategy and help us to deliver it.

I am delighted that we now have a play strategy that reflects these aspirations and will help us to achieve them, so that we can all champion play for children and young people.

Councillor Shireen Ritchie
Cabinet Member for Family and Children’s Services
### Contributing to healthy lifestyles

Play is key to the development of good physical and mental health. Positive play can support well-being and health lifestyles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Action Required</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Responsible Department</th>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Encourage children to engage in physical activity through play and sports. | • Review links between the youth service, parks, the play service and Sports Strategy.  
• Increase use of climbing facilities in partnership with Westway Development Trust.  
• Increase sporting activities in community settings.  
• Promote the use of outdoor play space and the provision of physical challenge in 0 to 5s settings. | September 2007 | Arts and Leisure Services/ Play Service Team/ Youth Support and Development Service (YSDS) | Action Plan produced.                                                                 |
| Promote swimming lessons for children in supervised play settings. | • Learn to Swim initiative during holidays | June 2006       | Schools Sports Partnership                                 | 100 children per year learn to swim 25 metres.                                        |
| Promote healthy eating in play settings.                            | • Develop healthy eating policies in Breakfast Clubs and Play Centres.  
• Target children with poor nutrition at home to encourage healthy eating.  
• Ensure each play setting promotes healthy snacks.  
• Promote healthy snacks in 0 to 5s play settings | July 2006  
Ongoing  
September 2006  
March 2007 | Play Service Team  
Play Service Team/ Schools  
Play Service Team  
Childcare Services / Sure Start Local Programmes | Policies agreed and adopted.  
All Play Centres have healthy snacks available.  
Healthy Snacks promotions held in the Royal Borough’s Children’s Centres. |

"Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."

The Royal Borough Vision for Families and Children

Our Vision for Families and Children sets out six aims for children and young people in Kensington and Chelsea. These are:

1. To respect themselves and others, and engage positively with society.
2. To be enquiring and keen to learn and to help others.
3. To enjoy life and have fun.
4. To grow up safely and healthily.
5. To have their achievements recognised and built upon.
6. To be prepared for an active, economically independent, participative adulthood.
7. To get the extra help they need if they are in difficult circumstances.
Play is usually a social experience and it is important to provide families and groups of people the space and opportunity to play in a sociable way. It can provide a range of learning experiences for adults, children and young people alike. We will champion the provision of quality play opportunities for children and for families within the community.

**The Royal Borough's Vision for Play**

Our vision is that all children living in Kensington and Chelsea will have easy access to a variety of enriching play opportunities that are of high quality, fun, safe, inclusive and that contribute to their learning and development.

"More supervision and secure sites" (parent)

We will act as a champion for children and their need for such play opportunities within the borough; play opportunities of which we can be proud.
The scope of the Play Strategy

The Play Strategy covers children and young people aged 0 to 16 in the Royal Borough, children and young people with disabilities up to the age of 18 and Looked After Children until they are 21 years and sometimes beyond. It also considers transitional issues for older children and links to youth service provision. This document covers the period 2006 to 2009, but will be constantly reviewed and updated during this time.

It is a strategy for play, rather than for the Play Service, and therefore encompasses the work of a range of Council services and community partners.

"Play underpins the entire curriculum" (teacher)

The context of the Play Strategy

The Royal Borough's Community Strategy demonstrates that there is limited open space within Kensington and Chelsea. As the most densely populated borough in the UK, we aim to maximise the use of our parks and open spaces as well as maximising play opportunities through other provision.

This strategy will support the achievement of a number of aims in the Community Strategy notably those to: increase levels of physical activity in Kensington and Chelsea; invest in resources that provide a focus for local communities; improve the provision of sports and play facilities and ensure that such facilities are accessible to all.

The Play Strategy has been produced alongside the Parks and Open Space Strategy to ensure that these essential plans complement each other. Our aim is to provide clear and robust
recommendations to support the Royal Borough's Vision for Families and Children and to contribute to the delivery of the Royal Borough's Children and Young People's Plan.

The Play Strategy has been informed by other local strategies and plans, including the Library Strategy, the Arts Strategy, the draft Sports Strategy, the Behaviour and Attendance Strategy and the Unitary Development Framework.

The Children Act (2004) establishes a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation between agencies in order to improve children's well-being. The Government's stated aim in the Every Child Matters framework is "to protect children at risk within a framework of universal services which support every child to develop their full potential".

The Royal Borough is committed to offering all children the opportunity to play in fully inclusive environments. Giving children the opportunity to learn and develop through play will contribute significantly to the outcomes framework of Every Child Matters. Registered play provision forms an integral part of the Childcare Bill, as a means for enabling parents to access work opportunities.

Funding

In March 2005, the Big Lottery Fund announced a new programme for developing children's play through local authorities during 2006 to 2009.
public service to children;

• Ensure that local authorities work with other local stakeholders to develop children's play strategies and plans; and,
• To ensure that good, inclusive and accessible children's play services and facilities are provided locally.

Integral to the funding will be a requirement for each local authority to produce a play strategy that raises the importance, value and status of children’s play. The Royal Borough’s allocation for 2006 to 2009 is £307,450. The priorities identified in this Play Strategy will inform the distribution of Big Lottery resources within the borough.

Maximising play space

Maximising the space to play in the Royal Borough remains a major challenge. The Play Strategy outlines a long-term investment in our playgrounds, play centres and open spaces. Plans are developing in collaboration with play specialists as well as children and young people themselves.

The quality of play space in housing estates, schools and other facilities will also be reviewed and monitored. We will strive to improve the quality and safety of these spaces and to improve access for children and young people. Where necessary, we will exert our community leadership role to influence others in pursuit of this goal.

In such a densely populated borough, new building projects can provide the opportunity for play space to be created. We will review planning applications in relation to the availability of play. Where possible, we will secure Section 106 funding to provide play as part of a new development or within the locality.

We are confident that the quality of open access play space will improve significantly as a result and this will be monitored through the pilot Children's Play Council Play Performance Indicators.

"Less cars and more safety" (child)
Methodology

A series of consultations to support the Play Strategy were carried out between June and October 2005 with children, parents, school staff, head teachers and Council officers.

Gathering views from children formed the largest part of the Play Strategy Consultation. A total of 305 surveys across 21 different settings were completed by children aged 5 to 16. 200 children completed the online interactive survey, whilst 105 completed a paper version (where the internet was unavailable).

A total of 69 teachers from 40 schools (both state funded and private) in the Royal Borough completed paper-based and electronic surveys and 86 parents completed questionnaires during a Children First event at Kensington Town Hall.

Alongside the consultations, a full audit of current play provision in the Royal Borough was completed, including registered and non-registered play provision, parks and open spaces, as well as sport. The audit also covered usage of supervised play provision, access to play for children with disabilities and cost benchmarking with other London boroughs.

A review of the contribution made to play by other services and consultations in the borough was carried out. Local, regional, national and funding drivers were analysed. Eight themes emerged from the subsequent analysis and now form the basis of our strategy:

- Ensuring accessibility and choice.
- Promoting social inclusion.
- Ensuring children’s participation.
- Contributing to healthy lifestyles.
- Contributing to economic well-being.

Parents’ and children’s views

- Almost half of the children indicated safety as a reason for not playing in the street.
- One in five children indicated that feeling unsafe was a reason for not playing in the park.
- Safety issues were indicated by parents as the most important reason why their children play at home or in the street where they can keep an eye on them.

-schools need]"more space, both outside and inside for play" (teacher)
44 per cent of children would like to have more variety in play opportunities and equipment. Parents also want their children to have greater choice in play.

50 per cent of children indicated that they play in their local park, street or adventure playground because their friends play there.

45 per cent of the Traveller children stated that play would be more fun for them if they had more friends around.

80 per cent of children play in parks. 20 per cent of children listed parks as their favourite place to play.

45 per cent of Traveller children do not play in parks.

Traveller children did not attend play centres.

When asked about play, some older children preferred to “hang out with friends” or “chill somewhere”.

Children who lived near parks were more likely to play in them than children who lived further away from parks.

Adventure playgrounds are popular among children with a disability, in part because of the availability of specialised equipment.

Children with disabilities recommended that more specialised equipment would make play more fun for them.

‘White children’ were least likely to play in a play centre compared to children from other ethnic groups.

25 per cent of children did not attend play centres because they did not know about them.

75 per cent of children regarded play in school as very important.

---

**Monitoring and implementing the Play Strategy**

The Children's Play Council Performance Indicators

We intend to adopt the recently developed Children’s Play Council Performance Indicators 1 to 4 for ‘The Play Offer’ and work with the Play Council to pilot these indicators in the Royal Borough. These indicators will be monitored as part of the Early Years Childcare and Play Audit 2006. They are set out in the table overleaf.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Action Required</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>December 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>January 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>September 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>July 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>July 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>March 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Better equipment and toys** (child)

44 per cent of children would like to have more variety in play opportunities and equipment. Parents also want their children to have greater choice in play.

50 per cent of children indicated that they play in their local park, street or adventure playground because their friends play there.

45 per cent of the Traveller children stated that play would be more fun for them if they had more friends around.

80 per cent of children play in parks. 20 per cent of children listed parks as their favourite place to play.

45 per cent of Traveller children do not play in parks.

Traveller children did not attend play centres.

When asked about play, some older children preferred to “hang out with friends” or “chill somewhere”.

Children who lived near parks were more likely to play in them than children who lived further away from parks.
Play Indicator | Outcome
--- | ---
1 Participation in play and informal recreation | The number of children and young people from birth to 16 who ‘play out’ for at least four hours per week.
2 Access to a variety of facilities and spaces | The percentage of children and young people who have access to at least three different types of space or facility, within easy walking or cycling distance.
3 Quality of facilities and spaces | The proportion of facilities and spaces meeting the quality criteria, with, for example, ratings of ‘excellent’, ‘good’, ‘adequate’ or ‘poor’.
4 Satisfaction | The percentage of children and young people who think that the range and quality of play facilities and spaces that they can access is ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

The baseline data for these performance indicators will be collected by January 2007.
Recommendations

Based on our vision statement, audit and consultation, the following themes have been identified as integral to the development of children's play opportunities in the Royal Borough.

The Royal Borough’s Eight Themes for Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Enabling Improved Child Development (Link to Enjoy and Achieve)</td>
<td>Play is central to a child's personal development in many ways, enhancing social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional progress. We will promote the contribution play makes to the learning and achievement of children and young people in the home, in schools and in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Providing Safe Play Opportunities (Link to Staying Safe)</td>
<td>Children in the Royal Borough have stated that they need to play in a safe environment. Safety can be balanced with giving children the opportunity to be adventurous and take appropriate risks. We will develop play in centres, parks, schools and estates that will challenge children whilst ensuring safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Providing Good Quality Play (Link to Enjoy and Achieve and Being Healthy)</td>
<td>Play should be of a high quality in terms of experience, equipment and staffing. Children and parents will want places for play that are well maintained and of a high standard. Where possible, parents and children should be able to play together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Ensuring Accessibility and Choice (Link to Making a Positive Contribution and Enjoy and Achieve)</td>
<td>Play is inherent in children's natural instincts and should be accessible and affordable to all. Children and young people are more likely to play if facilities lie within easy reach of their homes and school. We will strive to meet the wish of residents for play spaces close to where they live and go to school. We aim to ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Promoting Social Inclusion (Link to Making a Positive Contribution and Enjoy and Achieve)</td>
<td>A diverse range of children and young people attend play facilities. The specific needs of users have to be addressed to ensure equality of access to play. We will identify gaps in play provision and work to ensure that no group is excluded from play opportunities in the Royal Borough. We will strive to ensure that disability is not a barrier to play by providing comprehensive and integrated and specialist services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Ensuring Children’s Participation (Link to Making a Positive Contribution)</td>
<td>Children are the 'experts' on the strengths and weaknesses of their play areas. For children to participate effectively, we will have confidence in their contribution. We will support the participation and influence of children and young people in play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Contributing to Healthy Lifestyles (Link to Being Healthy)</td>
<td>Play is key to the development of good physical and mental health. Physical activity in play provides exercise, promotes physical coordination, and develops skills for the growing child. We will support healthy lifestyles through play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Contributing to Economic Well-Being (Link to Promoting Economic Well-Being)</td>
<td>Open access affordable play services provide a universal service to the community. It ensures that economic circumstances are not a barrier to play, whilst providing stimulating play and childcare for children of working families.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Greater London Authority (2005)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Action Required</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Responsible Department</th>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase safety in playgrounds and parks.</td>
<td>• Arts and Leisure Services to carry out a safety audit in parks and open spaces.</td>
<td>September 2007</td>
<td>Arts and Leisure Services</td>
<td>Action plan produced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Play Service Team to work with the TMO to identify safety issues in estate-based playgrounds.</td>
<td>February 2007</td>
<td>Tenant Management Organisation/ Play Service Team</td>
<td>Action plan produced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The use of youth outreach and PCSOs to be targeted at anti-social behaviour by young people in parks.</td>
<td>December 2006</td>
<td>Youth Support and Development Service/ Community Safety/ Parks Police</td>
<td>Action plan produced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend supervised play opportunities to target communities through adventure playgrounds, outreach in parks and play centres.</td>
<td>• Identify gaps in services from the audit of existing facilities.</td>
<td>December 2006</td>
<td>Arts and Leisure Services/ Play Service Team</td>
<td>Action plan produced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Creation of sites where safe supervised play can be promoted.</td>
<td>September 2007</td>
<td>Arts and Leisure Services/ Play Service Team</td>
<td>Supervised play available in Westfield Park, Little Wormwood Scrubs and priority sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with the Parks Strategy Steering Group to consider how parents/carers and children can be catered for through the provision of enhanced play areas.</td>
<td>• Consider safe play issues in the development of the Parks Strategy and capital plans.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Arts and Leisure Services/ Play Service Team</td>
<td>Children’s safety is fully considered in all capital plans for parks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support the creation of play spaces where parents and carers can play with and supervise children, as appropriate.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Arts and Leisure Services/ Play Service Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Action Plan

### Improved Child Development: Play is fundamental to the learning and development of children and young people. We will promote play in the home, school and community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Action Required</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Responsible Department</th>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting and extending play-based learning in line with Birth to 3 Matters Framework and Foundation Stage curriculum.</td>
<td>• Review of the new Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum 0 to 5 years of age.</td>
<td>July 2007</td>
<td>Early Years Advisory Team / Childcare Services Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build on school staff's recognition of the importance of play. Provide training opportunities in relation to the importance of play in children's learning.</td>
<td>• Training plan for play in schools developed.</td>
<td>September 2007</td>
<td>Play Service Team / Schools Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• All schools can access training in play-based learning.</td>
<td>September 2007</td>
<td>Schools Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Play Therapy Service has achieved positive outcomes in the five schools accessing the service. Increased access to the service should be considered as part of the extended schools initiative.</td>
<td>• Review of play therapy services carried out.</td>
<td>December 2006</td>
<td>Behaviour and Attendance Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased services considered by the Extended Schools Steering Group.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Extended Schools Co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased access to play in primary schools.</td>
<td>• Primary schools to audit play opportunities for children.</td>
<td>July 2007</td>
<td>Schools Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Primary schools to be encouraged to create targeted learning opportunities for pupils through extended play services.</td>
<td>September 2007</td>
<td>Extended Schools Childcare and Play Working Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Goals

- **Recognising the importance of play in parenting support in children's centres and extended schools.**
  - Establish a borough-wide network of parent/carer toddler groups.
  - Develop play and parenting courses in extended schools and supplementary schools.
  - Timescale: March 2008
  - Responsible Department: Children's Centre Lead Officer / Project Board
  - Evaluation Criteria: Access to groups linked to all ten children's centres.
  - Courses developed in 25 per cent of primary / 15 per cent of supplementary schools.

- **Develop library services to support play and reading for families.**
  - Extend the Bookstart initiative borough-wide and to children's centres and home visiting.
  - Book and game lending be extended to children's centres and extended schools.
  - Timescale: September 2007
  - Responsible Department: Library Service / Children's Centre Project Board
  - Evaluation Criteria: Bookstart available to all families.
  - 50 per cent of children's centres and 15 per cent of primary schools can access lending facilities on site.

- **Increase access to creative art-based play activities.**
  - Develop a database of creative artists that can support play in schools, play centres and community play settings.
  - Promote creative play through the Arts Grants scheme.
  - Timescale: December 2006
  - Responsible Department: Arts Service Manager
  - Evaluation Criteria: Database produced and circulated to schools and service providers.
  - Increased small grants funding to creative play projects.